

By Katy Zillmer, *Oakdale Lake Elmo Review*

Oakdale has received a \$400,000 piece of the pie in the form of federal energy funding for improvements at the public works facilities and City Hall this fall.

U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum, DFL-District 4, made a request on behalf of the city for funding from the "Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act" last year.

The act is a \$33.3 billion spending bill designated to meet infrastructure needs of the country and focus on the shortfalls of national energy policies, according to a statement from McCollum's office.

Projects at the city's public works facilities, 1900 Hadley Ave., are now underway to replace the original heating and cooling system with a geothermal operation and switch indoor and outdoor lighting to LED technology.

The heating and cooling system at public works is at least 20 years old and inefficient, Public Works Director Brian Bachmeier said.

A geothermal heating and cooling operation will use energy produced through the water filtration treatment system adjacent to public works, he said.

The filtration system was built in Oakdale, with funding from 3M, to remove any traces of perfluorochemicals (PFCs) in wells used by the city.

PFCs were used for decades by 3M to produce heat-resistant Scotchgard and Teflon and later phased out of their products.

Bachmeier said the possibility to use the water treatment facility made the project even more appealing to the city. The use of the energy from the facility does not cause any loss of water that goes back to wells used by residents, he said.

Improvements at public works also include better insulation and the replacement of overhead doors to a model that reduces heat loss, according to a press release from the city.

A hazardous waste drop-off site at public works has been converted into a repair space for city vehicles, Bachmeier said. The drop-off site was moved to Woodbury.

A fire sprinkler system is being installed as well to bring the building up to code, Bachmeier added.

"Now that we're able to work on the larger equipment, we're saving money there from having to contract out services (and) saving money on reduced heating and cooling costs," Bachmeier said.

Lighting at City Hall will also be replaced with LED technology, insulation will be improved, and some heating units will be repaired, said City Administrator Craig Waldron.

A majority of the City Hall projects are funded through the federal money, while the public works improvements are bolstered by those dollars as well as a portion of the city's capital improvement budget, he said.

Estimated energy savings between the two facilities could be \$10,000 per year, Waldron said. "You're going to have a complete overall between City Hall and public works," he said.

A groundbreaking for the public works projects took place last week and will be finished by Nov. 1.

Without the federal dollars, the city's improvements would not have been cost-effective, Waldron said.

